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SECRETARY-GENERAL'S REPRESENTATIVE ON EAST TIMOR EXPRESSES CONCERN AT 'DEPLORABLE BREACH OF DIPLOMATIC CONFIDENTIALITY'

Protest to Foreign Minister of Indonesia at Publication of Discussion Papers Intended to Help Search for Internationally Acceptable Solution

The following statement was issued this evening by the Spokesman for Secretary-General Kofi Annan:

It has come to the attention of the United Nations that a highly confidential letter dated 23 April 1998, addressed to Nugroho Wisnumurti, Director-General for Political Affairs in the Indonesian Department of Foreign Affairs, by Ambassador Jamsheed Marker, the Secretary-General's Personal Representative for East Timor, has become public.

The letter contained an annexure marked "Strictly Confidential", which was designed to provide material for discussion and brainstorming at the May 1998 round of the senior officials' meeting between Indonesia and Portugal under the auspices of the Secretary-General on the question of East Timor. It was clearly understood and specified that the contents were exploratory in nature and meant to enrich previous discussions. They were intended to serve as a basis for a broad exchange of views and did not constitute proposals of any kind.

The Personal Representative of the Secretary-General is dismayed and seriously concerned at the deplorable breach of diplomatic confidentiality that has led to the publication of these documents. He has expressed his grave concerns in a protest to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, Ali Alatas.

The Personal Representative reiterates that there have been no proposals, formal or informal, made by the United Nations on the issue of East Timor and that the Secretary-General's efforts continue in the direction of facilitating the search for a just, comprehensive and internationally acceptable solution to the question of East Timor.

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